

### The Broad Reach of the Civil War Era

Zach Isenhower

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## Editorial

### THE BROAD REACH OF THE CIVIL WAR ERA

Isenhower, Zach

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Preparing issues of the *Civil War Book Review*, it is easy to get caught up in the sheer volume of scholarship produced on the era. The temptation is to point out again and again the hundreds of combined reviews and annotations over the course of a year or two. In fairness, the numbers *are* amazing. Yet arguably the more impressive aspect of this scholarship is its diversity.

Among the cutting-edge themes explored in this issue is the importance of urban spaces to our understanding of the intersections of race, class, politics, economics, and ethnicity in the Civil War era. T. Michael Parrish offers a look at *Confederate Cities: The Urban South During the Civil War Era* edited by Andrew Slap and Frank Towers. This collection of essays illustrates the cultural, economic, and social costs of war in the areas often hardest hit. Southern cities were also sites of particular dynamics among slaves, free blacks, ethnic immigrants, and white working class and elite southerners. This issue features an interview with Jeff Strickland, author of *Unequal Freedoms: Ethnicity, Race, and White Supremacy in Civil War-Era Charleston*, which highlights how immigration and ethnicity played a vital role in shaping politics, social hierarchy, and racial identity in the South.

Shifting perspective from broad urban social dynamics in Confederate cities to a single observer's view from one city, Minoa D. Uffelman examines a fresh edition of J.B. Jones' wartime record, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary: At the Confederate States Capital*, edited by James I. Robertson, Jr. In two volumes, Robertson turns his careful eye on an account over 150 years old, improving its accessibility and offering insight to the latest generation of scholars.

Offering new perspective on seemingly well-known aspects of the war are Kyle S. Sinisi and Steven Labet. Sinisi's work, reviewed by Aaron Astor, takes readers to mid-1864, when the Confederate military embarked upon its final foray into Union territory. Eschewing the more frequently trod paths following Jubal Early or John Bell Hood, Sinisi traces Sterling Price's expedition into

Missouri and examines the reasons why that state—long known for Confederate sympathy—failed to become a Confederate success story of liberation from Union forces. In Gordon S. Barker's review of Lubet's *The Colored Hero of Harper's Ferry: John Anthony Copeland and the War Against Slavery*, readers will similarly find a new take on the familiar. Lubet focuses on one of John Brown's earliest allies in the famous raid on Harper's Ferry. Copeland offered crucial legitimacy to Brown's project, which sought significant black participation. Lubet's work helps widen the spotlight often reserved for Brown.

Keeping with a theme of diversity, Frank Williams gives his take on two new works on Abraham Lincoln. Michael Anderegg's *Lincoln and Shakespeare* explores the literary inspiration often closest to the heart of the sixteenth president. Terry Alford, on the other hand, offers a close-up of Lincoln's assassin in his much-anticipated *Fortune's Fool: The Life of John Wilkes Booth*. LSU Special Collections' Hans Rasmussen uncovers a fascinating collaboration of two music writers who did not just write for diverse political candidates, but for opponents Rutherford B. Hayes and Samuel J. Tilden during the election of 1876.

Readers will also find a great number of diverse regions covered by the titles reviewed in this issue. The Civil War in New Mexico, Arkansas, Massachusetts, Tennessee, and Kentucky all receive specific analysis. Film buffs too will be particularly delighted by new scholarship on, among other themes, *Gone with the Wind*, as well as the legacy of the Civil War in the Ku Klux Klan and *Birth of a Nation*. When it comes to scholarship it seems the Civil War era knows few boundaries. We wouldn't have it any other way.